

**COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CURRENT FISHING STATUS OF
PAALAMEENMADU AND KALLAR BARMOUTHS IN
BATTICALOA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**



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ABSTRACT

Batticaloa lagoon is one of the productive estuaries in East coast of Sri Lanka and is connected to the sea at two points as Paalameenmadu and Kallar barmouths. The entire dynamics of the lagoon is based on seasonal opening and closing of the above barmouths which influences the fish catch composition in adjacent areas. Unfortunately, in the recent years timing of opening of barmouth has become more irregular due to various political influences. There were no any studies done to analyse both the direct and indirect affects as well as influences of barmouth opening on fishing. This study collect information on current fishing practices, regular and seasonal catch composition. The level of awareness on fishing regulation and sustainable fishery, and impact of COVID-19 were studied properly. Fisheries data were collected from 10 major barmouth fishery landing sites from January to April 2021. 210 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect responses after a pre-test and analysed with descriptive statistics method using SPSS. The study revealed that Paalameenmadu barmouth was opened annually and Kallar barmouth has been closed for last five years. The most practice crafts in Paalameenmadu is Out board Fiber Reinforced Plastic boats (OFRP) by 35.26% of fishers and 87.04% fishers use small lagoon canoe for fishing in Kallar. Total seven types of fishing gears used, among them hook and line, cast net and dragnet were identified as major fishing gear operated. 30 species have been recorded in catch, representing 17 families. Among them dominant fish families are 17.11% of Scombridae and 14.81% of Penaeidae species in Paalameenmadu. In kallar 18.75% of penaeidae and 16.32% of Gerreidae species recorded. Barmouth opening is favourable for fishing and high amount of 38.57% Penaeidae species caught during

barmouth opening period. Fishermen have good awareness on fishing regulation and moderate awareness on importance of fishery resources sustainability. COVID-19 pandemic has decreased the income of fishermen. Irregular and early barmouth opening have caused certain a reduction in fish production. This research stresses and paves way to sustainable management strategy with further research and stakeholder awareness programmes on lagoon sustainability.

Keywords: Lagoon fishery, COVID-19 impacts, Fishery regulations, Sustainable fishing, Seasonal changes